

# Enforcing the Nametag Defilade Standard

The U.S. Army has made quantum leaps in track vehicles since the M48-series tanks. Technological advances have provided computerized fire control systems, thermal sights, laser range finders, and suspension systems that allow tanks to maintain a steady platform over rough terrain.

Although technology has improved the tank's lethality, it has not changed the need to have a bird's-eye view of the situation; vehicle crewmembers still stand in hatches of moving vehicles with their bodies exposed.

Training Circular 21-306, *Tracked Combat Vehicle Driver Training*, recommends all vehicle commanders stay below chest (nametag) defilade in moving vehicles. When standing in the hatch of a moving vehicle, applying the nametag defilade standard provides ease of dropping down in the vehicle, which greatly reduces risk in a rollover situation and gives less exposure to enemy fire.

Ignoring the nametag defilade standard has been the cause of many accidents where soldiers have been injured or killed. Just in the past year, two soldiers died in accidents because they were not following established procedures during the operation of a combat vehicle. In the first accident, a M1A1 tank commander (TC) lost his life when his tank slid off a concrete turn pad and rolled over, crushing the TC in the process. While there were other factors involved in this accident, the TC was not at nametag defilade.

The second accident occurred when a Bradley commander, standing waist defilade in the commander's hatch, received a blow to the face from a tree limb that was 22 inches in circumference. Had this soldier been at nametag defilade, the branch would have passed harmlessly over his head rather than crushing it.

Proactive leaders can reduce the risk of injury, or even death, by training and executing battle drills, which allow leaders to

execute complex or unplanned missions by using them as basic building blocks in planning and executing missions. Battle drills are a form of risk management because they can enhance command and control, reduce uncertainty, and insert risk management into the military decisionmaking process during the planning and rehearsal stage of an operation.

Consider risk management in all that you do. You do not need a written product to conduct risk management. When you are sitting in your assembly area, take a moment to think about the types of missions that you could receive.

Take time to consider environmental effects, such as weather, terrain, time of day, and sleep deprivation, when executing missions. Identify and assess the reasonably expected hazards of the operation, and possible ways to reduce the effects of those hazards as you execute the mission.

This hazard is not unique to M1-series tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, it applies to trucks with ring-mounted weapons, HMMWVs, M109s, recovery vehicles, and many other tracked/wheeled vehicles. Leaders at all levels must conduct a risk assessment to determine if it is mission essential for soldiers to stand in hatches of vehicles. Leaders must also ensure that vehicle crews practice rollover drills until it becomes reactive for soldiers standing in hatches to drop down and brace for a rollover.

The nametag defilade standard is as old as tracked vehicles, but still requires constant enforcement by leaders at all levels. The Army needs hard-charging, motivated soldiers to enforce standards, execute battle drills, and incorporate risk management into everything we do.

*Information for this article was provided by the U.S. Army Safety Center, Fort Rucker, Alabama.*



**INCORRECT**



**INCORRECT**



**CORRECT**



**CORRECT**

M1 Photos by Robert Stevenson